

Shakespeare's Next Top Model



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Shakespeare's Next Top Model

SPOOF. Greetings and welcome to “Shakespeare’s Next Top Model,” the TV-reality show where the lovely ladies of Shakespeare compete for a modeling contract and the chance to be Shakespeare’s next top model. The three judges—Cleopatra, Puck, and Princess Catherine—will speak with contestants and review their modeling portfolios to decide a winner. Contestants vying for a modeling contract include Bianca, Desdemona, Juliet, Ophelia, and Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth arrives on set and mistakenly thinks she’s competing for “Shakespeare’s Next Top Queen” and Othello shows up in a jealous rage thinking Desdemona is auditioning for “Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire”!

Performance Time: Approximately 30 minutes.

Characters

(6 M, 19 F, 9 flexible, opt. extras)
(With doubling: Minimum cast of 15.)

KING CLAUDIUS: Host of “Shakespeare’s Next Top Model” and Prince Hamlet’s uncle; from *Hamlet*.

PRINCE HAMLET: Stage manager of “Shakespeare’s Next Top Model” and Prince of Denmark; from *Hamlet*.

CHORUS: Wants to set the scene even on a reality-TV show; from *Henry V*; flexible.

HORATIO: Sound booth operator and Prince Hamlet’s friend’ from *Hamlet*; male.

CLEOPATRA: Judge on “Shakespeare’s Next Top Model” and Queen of Egypt; from *Antony and Cleopatra*.

PUCK: Judge and mischievous fairy from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; flexible.

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Judge and daughter of the King of France from *Henry V*; speaks with a French accent.

DESDEMONA: Contestant and daughter of a Venetian senator who is married to Othello; from *Othello*.

LADY MACBETH: Contestant who mistakenly thinks she’s competing for “Shakespeare’s Next Top Queen”; from *Macbeth*; speaks with a Scottish accent (opt.) and wears a dress.

JULIET: Contestant and Romeo’s girlfriend; from *Romeo and Juliet*.

BIANCA: Contestant; sweet, younger sister from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

TITANIA: Contestant who mistakenly thinks she’s competing for “Shakespeare’s Next Top Queen”; queen of the fairies from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

PORTIA: Contestant and the wife of Brutus from *Julius Caesar*.

HERMIA: Contestant, a young Athenian woman from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

HELENA: Contestant, a young Athenian woman from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

OPHELIA: Contestant and a noblewoman from Denmark; from *Hamlet*.

KATHERINE: Shrew from *The Taming of the Shrew*.

ROSALIND: Arrives on the set disguised as a man; Duke Senior's daughter from *As You Like It*.

VIOLA: Arrives on the set disguised as a man; young woman from *Twelfth Night*.

OTHELLO: Desdemona's husband who shows up in a jealous rage thinking she is auditioning for the reality TV-show, "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire"; from *Othello*.

CORDELIA: King Lear's loyal, youngest daughter; from *King Lear*.

GONERIL: King Lear's ruthless, eldest daughter; from *King Lear*.

REGAN: King Lear's manipulative middle daughter; from *King Lear*.

ROMEO: Juliet's overly dramatic boyfriend; from *Romeo and Juliet*.

MUSTARDSEED: Fairy attendant from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; flexible.

COBWEB: Fairy attendant from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; female.

MOTH: Fairy attendant from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; flexible.

PEASEBLOSSOM: Fairy attendant from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; wears a long skirt with sweatpants on underneath; female.

PLAYER 1-5: Performers in a troupe from *Hamlet*; flexible.

KING HAMLET: Hamlet's father from *Hamlet*.

EXTRAS (opt.): As members of the Fairy Court and Players.

Setting

Set of the reality-TV show "Shakespeare's Next Top Model."

Set

Set of the reality-TV show "Shakespeare's Next Top Model."

There is a table and three chairs SR.

Props

Clipboard

Small red flower

Modeling portfolios

Note

*“Lord,
what fools
these mortals be.”*

—Puck

Shakespeare's Next Top Model

(AT RISE: Set of the reality-TV show, "Shakespeare's Next Top Model." There are a table and three chairs SR. Chorus enters and stands CS.)

CHORUS: (*To audience.*) "Shakespeare's Next Top Model"
Is now the two hours traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

(*King Claudius enters.*)

KING CLAUDIUS: Hey! Who are you, young scamp?

CHORUS: Young scamp, indeed! I will have you know that I
am the Chorus. I set the scene for the whole show.

KING CLAUDIUS: Look, "Shakespeare's Next Top Model" is
about to start. Why don't you go set the scene somewhere
else?

CHORUS: (*Aside, to audience.*) What a wretched and peevish
fellow is this King. (*To King Claudius.*) But the Chorus has a
long history of setting the scenes in Shakespeare's plays!
What about the Chorus in "Romeo and Juliet"? And don't
forget Shakespeare's history, "Henry the Fifth." That has
some great Chorus monologues, let me tell you.

KING CLAUDIUS: Well, this is reality television. We don't
need any scene setting here.

CHORUS: But doesn't the audience need to set the scene in
their imaginations?

KING CLAUDIUS: People watch reality television so they
don't have to use their imaginations.

CHORUS: And who are you, anyway?

KING CLAUDIUS: I am King Claudius of Denmark. I am the
host for "Shakespeare's Next Top Model."

CHORUS: You? But I thought King Hamlet was supposed to be the host?

KING CLAUDIUS: Yeah, well er...my brother didn't turn up...decided to plan an invasion of Norway or something...so I get to be the host.

CHORUS: Invasion of Norway, you say?

KING CLAUDIUS: Yeah, Norway.

CHORUS: I thought King Hamlet's ambassadors said that Norway was going to attack Poland and leave Denmark alone. 'Tis strange that King Hamlet would be planning an invasion of Norway when he just obtained peace, don't you think?

KING CLAUDIUS: How do you know so much about Hamlet? There isn't a Chorus in "Hamlet."

CHORUS: I'm a Chorus. I kind of have a big-picture perspective on everything. It's really cool.

KING CLAUDIUS: Look, I told you to go, didn't I?

CHORUS: Well, if you ask me, something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

KING CLAUDIUS: Well, no one asked you, now, did they? You are just the Chorus, anyhow! Now get off the stage! I need to introduce the show to our live studio audience and bring out the judges.

CHORUS: I'm going! I'm going! Forsooth!

(Aside, to audience.) Admit me Chorus to this history;

Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,

Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play. *(Exits.)*

KING CLAUDIUS: *(To audience.)* Ladies and gentlemen! Greetings, and welcome to "Shakespeare's Next Top Model," the reality show where the lovely ladies of Shakespeare will compete for a modeling contract and the chance to be Shakespeare's next—or more rightly, first—top model. Each contestant has already submitted a portfolio of her modeling work. The three judges will speak with them individually to decide who will be the winner of "Shakespeare's Next Top Model"! *(Calls.)* Stage manager?

(Hamlet enters, carrying a clipboard.)

HAMLET: Yes, Uncle?

KING CLAUDIUS: Hamlet? What are you doing here?

HAMLET: I'm stage managing, Uncle Claudius. What does it look like?

KING CLAUDIUS: Right. Why don't you bring out the judges?

HAMLET: Sure thing, Uncle. I still can't believe Dad never showed up to host. 'Tis strange that he would go plan an invasion of Norway after barely defeating them before in battle and finally obtaining peace with them...and on today of all days, huh?

KING CLAUDIUS: Yeah, really weird.

HAMLET: Yeah. I'll send out the judges. *(Calls.)* You are up! I mean, you are up, Your Majesty!

KING CLAUDIUS: *(To audience.)* Our first judge is the la femme fatale from the Valley of the Kings. This Egyptian goddess incarnate enjoys sailing in style on her barge down the Nile and spending quality time with her Roman ruler, whoever he is at the time. Let's give it up for...Queen Cleopatra!

(Cleopatra enters.)

CLEOPATRA: Thank you. *(To Hamlet.)* And where's my throne, might I ask, slave?

HAMLET: Just sit on any one of those chairs over there. *(Points to chairs.)* And like I've already told you, I'm not your slave. I'm actually the Prince of Denmark.

CLEOPATRA: Look, I really don't have time to be judging this silly competition. My dearest Anthony is about to wage a navel battle against that vile co-ruler of the Roman Empire, Octavius. I really have to sit in that quaint little chair, slave? *(Sits down on a chair begrudgingly.)*

HAMLET: *(Insulted.)* I'm not your slave!

KING CLAUDIUS: *(To audience.)* Our next judge is a merry wanderer of the night. This shrewd and knavish sprite and trickster enjoys frightening maids in the villagery, misleading night travelers, and messing up Internet wireless connections. Let's see a show of hands for Robin Goodfellow!

HAMLET: *(Shouts.)* You're up, Puck! *(Puck enters, skipping around the stage playfully. Bows to the audience then takes a seat at the table.)* Ready to judge, Puck?

PUCK: Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

KING CLAUDIUS: *(To audience.)* And, finally, we have our final judge for the evening. Let's give it up for the Queen of France, recently engaged to King Henry the Fifth...Princess Catherine of France!

HAMLET: *(To Princess Catherine offstage, shouts.)* You're up, Your Majesty!

(Princess Catherine enters.)

PRINCESS CATHERINE: *(Strong French accent.)* Oh là là! Isn't this exciting?

HAMLET: Please sit here, Your Grace. *(Motions to judge's table.)*

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Merci beaucoup! *(Sits at judges table.)*

HAMLET: I'm sending out the first contestant.

(Hamlet and Horatio exit. Bianca enters.)

KING CLAUDIUS: *(To audience.)* This native beauty of Padua enjoys playing her lyre and spending time with her Latin tutor, Cambio. Let's give a warm welcome to...Bianca!

(Bianca enters.)

BIANCA: Thank you! Thank you! I'm so excited to be here!

CLEOPATRA: All right, Bianca, is it? Why do you think you should be Shakespeare's Next Top Model?

BIANCA: Well, I have really good interpersonal skills. You should see how I manage my sister. She's, shall we say, *challenging*. All models need good people skills, right?

CLEOPATRA: True. Have you dated anyone important lately?

PRINCESS CATHERINE: *Sacré bleu!* To ask such things to a lady!

CLEOPATRA: What? Dating powerful men doesn't hurt in the modeling industry, or in ruling a Roman province, either.

BIANCA: Well, I do have a couple of wealthy suitors. But I don't really want to marry them.

CLEOPATRA: Who said anything about marrying them?

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Oh là là! To say such things! *Sacrilège!*

PUCK: We were looking through the portfolio of pictures you submitted, Bianca, and I really feel that, frankly, there just isn't anything magical about you.

BIANCA: You mean magical like a special spark? More personality, perhaps?

PUCK: No, I mean magical as in no wings or anything.

BIANCA: Well, I'm not a fairy, if that's what you mean.

PUCK: Okay, then. Then the whole no wings thing makes sense.

KATHERINE: (*Offstage, calls.*) Bianca! Bianca!

BIANCA: Oh, dear! That's my sister Katherine!

(*Katherine enters.*)

KATHERINE: You talking about me? If I be waspish, best beware my sting! You little wretch! Trying to be Shakespeare's Next Top Model, are you? Of course, you, you irksome little rat! Always the proper, always the

beautiful one leaving me behind to rot away while you take all the glory! Well, I won't have it!

(Katherine starts to drag Bianca to exit.)

BIANCA: *(Struggling, shouts.)* Katherine! Stop being ridiculous! Put me down this instant! Help! Help!

(Katherine and Bianca exit.)

PUCK: Well, she was certainly a shrew.

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Shrewdly said.

(Hamlet enters with Rosalind and Viola, who are both dressed as men.)

HAMLET: Look, Viola, Rosalind, this is a competition for women, not men.

VIOLA: Rosalind and I know that, Hamlet. But we hoped—

ROSALIND: Hope is a waking dream, Viola.

HAMLET: If you know that "Shakespeare's Next Top Model" is for women, why are you still pestering me about competing?

ROSALIND: Because we are girls.

HAMLET: Excuse me?

ROSALIND: We are in disguise.

HAMLET: But why are you two ladies disguised as men?

ROSALIND: Hey! Don't ask me to explain The Bard. Girls dressed up as boys are just part of the whole Shakespeare romantic comedy thing.

VIOLA: Although in Shakespeare's day, it would have been boys dressed up as girls dressed up as boys, if that makes sense.

ROSALIND: Well said. That was laid on with a trowel.

HAMLET: Look, you can't compete. I'm bringing out the next contestant.

ROSALIND: Come on, Viola! Thanks for your assistance, Hamlet! I do desire we may be better strangers.

(Viola and Rosalind exit arm in arm.)

HAMLET: Thanks, Rosalind...I think. *(Calls.)* Lady Macbeth, you are up!

(Lady Macbeth enters. Hamlet exits.)

LADY MACBETH: *(With a Scottish accent. Rubbing at dress.)*
Out, damned spot! Out, I say! *(Realizes.)* Oh, it came out.
Cool.

KING CLAUDIUS: Ladies and gentleman, our next contestant comes to us from Scotland. Her passions include entertaining her guests and supporting her husband in all his ambitions—and we mean *all*. Let's give it up for...Lady Macbeth!

CLEOPATRA: All right, Lady Macbeth, is it?

LADY MACBETH: Aye, 'tis, lassie. I am ready to compete.

"I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on the other."

CLEOPATRA: Ambition. That's a great quality for a model.

LADY MACBETH: Model? As in fashion model?

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Oui, oui, Madame Macbeth.

LADY MACBETH: Why would I want to be a model?

PUCK: Don't ask me! You're the one who applied for "Shakespeare's Next Top Model." Really, what fools these mortals be!

LADY MACBETH: I thought this was "Shakespeare's Next Top Queen."

PRINCESS CATHERINE: Oh, no, madame! "Shakespeare's Next Top Queen" is not until next week.

LADY MACBETH: Alas and alack! What slings and arrows of outrageous fortune! What sea of troubles!

HAMLET: Hey! That sounds familiar...

[END OF FREEVIEW]